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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE FEB 24 2003

Applicants: KATO, et al

TECHNOLOGY CENTER R3700

Serial No.: 09/766,596

Filed: January 23, 2001

For: VACUUM PROCESSING APPARATUS AND OPERATING METHOD  
THEREFOR

Group: 3749

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**  
**UNDER 37 CFR 1.97 & 1.98**

February 20, 2003

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
Box AF

Sir:

Pursuant to Applicants' duty of disclosure, enclosed please find copies of documents to be considered during further examination of the above-identified application. Also enclosed is a Form, substantially equivalent to Form PTO-1449, listing the submitted documents. Further enclosed is an English translation of Japanese Patent Document No. 61-173445, which is one of the enclosed documents. Note that the enclosed documents include English translations of Decisions on Oppositions relating to corresponding Japanese patents, and not the Decisions themselves.

This Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted prior to a first Office Action on the merits in the above-identified application. Accordingly, requirements of 37 CFR § 1.97(e) are satisfied.

In any event, the following statement is made under 37 CFR § 1.97(e):

No item of information contained in this Information Disclosure Statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the

knowledge of the undersigned, no item of information contained in this Information Disclosure Statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR § 1.56(c), more than three months prior to the filing of this Information Disclosure Statement.

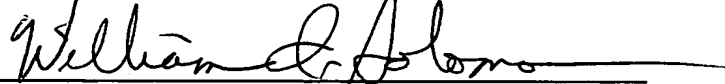
To the extent that the enclosed documents are not in English, it is respectfully submitted that requirements of 37 CFR § 1.97(a)(3) are satisfied by the enclosed English translation of Japanese Patent Document No. 61-173445.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all applicable requirements of 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 have been satisfied, in connection with each of the enclosed documents. Accordingly, consideration of the enclosed documents, upon further examination of the above-identified application, is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (referencing docket no. 520.30414V22) and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP



William I. Solomon  
Registration No. 28,565

1300 North Seventeenth Street  
Suite 1800  
Arlington, VA 22209  
Tel.: 703-312-6600  
Fax.: 703-312-6666  
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